(19)

A Letter to Sir J. P. Bart.

A Member for the enſuing Parliament, relating to the Union of *England* and *Scotland*.

SIR,

I Hope, I need not make long Excuſes for communicating to you, without your permiſſion, my Thoughts upon the Subject, that I ſhall now take into conſideration.

The Friendſhip and familiarity, with which you are pleas'd to honour me, is not the beſt Reaſon, I can advance for giving you this trouble

The care you have taken to retrieve the primitive Honour of the Epiſcopal Order, and your honourable Intentions to make it ſafe, for Biſhops to have a ſhare (as they have had ever ſince we were Chriſtians) in our Legiſlature, entitles you to the Patronage of all Productions, which tend to keep up the dignity of the Epiſcopate, and fence our civil Rights.

And though you are elected for a County, and alſo for a Corporation, where I had no Vote, yet I am ſure you believe, that every Member of Parliament ought to have Thoughts big enough to comprehend the true Intereſt of our whole Community, and ſhould be willing, on this matter, to hear all his Friends.

The Union of *England* and *Scotland* is of that moment, that it not only concerns the preſent Age, but will have an Influence upon all the Tranſactions of our lateſt Poſterity.

I am far from being fond of ſcribling, or venting my own Conceits, but if the people of *England* have any

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right to offer their Schemes to thoſe who ſit in our Senate Houſe, they can never exert it upon an occaſion, that will leſs call their Modeſty in queſtion.

The common Intereſt of all, that love either the Church of *England*, as by Law eſtabliſh'd, or the Political Conſtitution of our Country is at Stake.

I will freely own, that I believe nothing can be more for the welfare of theſe Three Kingdoms, than a *Pan-Britannick* Union of them all.

But then it ought to be upon condition, that due precautions are obſerv'd; and I muſt own, that I never heard any, but Merchant like Reaſons, which are below a true Stateſman, againſt cloſing (if ſufficient care is taken in working it up) with this Propoſal, of Uniting with *Scotland*.

It was formerly made in the days of our King *James* the Firſt, but there were then Objections againſt it, which are now out of Doors: And to ſay the truth, amongſt the few Diſcourſes, that I have met with which were written in thoſe times, none of them handled it, as it ought to have been.

I have not the vanity to think, I can treat it my ſelf, as it deſerves; I ſhall only deliver ſome few Thoughts tending to the ſafety of our moſt excellent Church, and for keeping out ſuch men from being Members, as are enemies to it, and may endanger our Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Government.

The great Sir *Francis Bacon*, as may be ſeen in his *Reſuſcitatio*, employed his Thoughts upon the Union of *England* and *Scotland*: But his Diſcourſes were, as he himſelf calls One of them, an Anatomy, and as he likewiſe owns, contain'd ſome things which he doubted, whether or no they were of any uſe.

I muſt however do him the right to ſay, that I believe he wrote ſo in Complaiſance to his Maſter King *James*, and in Condeſcenſion to the Humour of that Age.

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What he ſays upon this Nobleſt Theame, is not equally Maſculine with his Eſſays, which were what he intended, and expected ſhould laſt long, and be uſefull to, and vallued by future Generations.

He hath mixed Adulation. He hath dwelt upon triffling particulars. And, with all due Reverence to his great Name be it ſaid, he hath not expatiated, as became his Learning, and pretences to Religion and Solidity of Judgment, upon the moſt Important Articles.

I am glad nevertheleſs, that I have ſeen, what he hath written, Sold about in the Court of Requeſts, and other Publick places.

It may excite better Pens, as it hath called out mine, to put forth what Obſervations, they have made upon a Subject of ſuch univerſal, and for ought any man can tell, of perpetuall Influence.

I would have no Body, before they have Peruſed what I am going to ſay, ſo falſly Prejudge, as to imagine, that I am an Enemy to Liberty of Conſcience.

I call God to Witneſs, that I think it a natural Right; that I believe Perſecution to be contrary to the Genius of the Chriſtian Religion, and to be the worſt part of Popery, under whatever Denomination, of any Proteſtant Sect, it is diſguiſed. I cannot think, that the Civil Magiſtrate, though he hath the Guardianſhip of Religion, as it influenceth Societies, hath any Authority from God to uſe compulſive Methods in converting of Men, or to force them to Profeſs any Creed, or embrace any Communion. And I am of Opinion, that it debaſeth Eccleſiaſtical Authority, and bringeth the Sincerity of the Clergy into queſtion, when they call for the Aſſiſtance of the Temporal Arm to drive men into their Temples. In a word; Sanguinary Laws about Religious matters are Inconſiſtent with the free Choice of Religion, and the Execution of them no bet-

ter, than Humane Sacrifice, which God muſt Abhorr; and as for the leſſer Puniſhments, they Savour more of the Craft, wherewith Atheiſtical men have charged the Preiſthood, than of the Gentle and Merciful Inſtitutions of the Bleſſed Jeſus.

But after all this there is a difference betwixt Puniſhing men for not being of a Communion, and taking a reaſonable Care, that the National Church, which I hope I may have Leave to ſay, is founded on the Prophets, and Apoſtles, and hath greater Numbers amongſt us, than any Sect, on it's ſide, ſhould not be overturned.

The Preſervation of it was, if we may believe the laſt King's own Declaration, the chiefeſt part of his Errand hither; our Act to Eſtabliſh the Succeſſion provides, that all our future Princes ſhould be of that Religion; The late Speech of her preſent Majeſty to her diſſolved Engliſh Parliament, is a full and convincing Proof, that it is her Inclination; and the Choice of this preſent Houſe of Commons plainly ſhews, that it is as much the Inclination of the Major part of the People.

To preſerve our Church (*the Glory and Security of all the Reformed Churches*) and alſo to confirm our Fundamental Rights, two thing ſeem to me to be exceeding neceſſary.

The firſt is, that whenſoever there is a Coalition of the Legiſlatures of both Kingdoms, no man ſhould be Suffer'd to ſit in either Houſe, who did not entirely Conforme, if an Engliſhman, to the Church of *England*, as now by Law Eſtabliſhed, and if a Scotſman, ſubmit to all the Rights of Epiſcopacy, *which he muſt alſo agree, ſhall be Re-eſtabliſhed in* Scotland.

I am not for all this over fond of making the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper a Civil Teſt.

But ſure no man, that can think fit to continue it, as a Qualification for petty Offices, will think it unrea-

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ſonable to keep every Man from the Power of making Laws, who Scrupleth Communicating with our Church.

For the danger the Church is in at preſent from the Presbiterians, is infinitly greater than it has been formerly, and we have ſeen other Inſtances, than have been heretofore, of what the Presbiterians (*who are the only Proteſtant Diſſenters, the Church of* England *need be Apprehenſive of*) will do to Ruin the Apoſtolical Order of Biſhops, and deſtroy the uſe of Publick Liturgies.

Did not the Scotch Presbiterians in the late Civil Wars enter into *England*, and by the help of their Brethren here, force a Covenant for the Abolition of Epiſcopacy, and at laſt Effect it?

Did they not Proſecute their own Biſhops as Anti-Chriſtian, and Force ſome of them to do Pennance for having been Biſhops?

Have they, ſince this Revolution, been contented with leſs in their own Country, than pulling down their Order?

Don't they bragg of their Numbers at home, their Intereſt amongſt us, and that they have a mighty Power in the North of *Ireland*?

I hope, that like other Zealots, they are Credulous and Sanguine, and that, though they may be able to diſturb, as they have done already, our moſt Holy Church, yet they will never be able to Deſtroy it.

I am too great a Friend, *as well to all other ſorts of Diſſenters*, as to the Church of *England*, to wiſh that the Presbiterians ſhould have much Power.

I am almoſt ready to ſay, that I wiſh, they may not have it for their own ſakes, becauſe they would (as they have ever done) diſgrace themſelves by their furious Exerciſe of it.

This being the Caſe, it becomes all Lovers, either of our Religion, or of our Country, prudently to Guard againſt them.

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I am far from perſwading any bitter Courſes, even againſt them, though I am perſwaded in my own mind, that they would have no Mercy upon us.

Sure it is no matter of Rigour to hinder them from Deſtroying our Laws already made, or making Laws for us, to deſtroy our Conſtitution, which danger may be prevented, by making it one of the Articles of the Union, that no Man ſhall Sit in either Houſe, who doth not conſtantly Communicate with the Biſhops and Regular Clergy. *And Live ſolely in their Communion.*

I will not enter into a long Diſcourſe concerning the Divine Inſtitution of Biſhops.

I hope, notwithſtanding our Enemies ſo ſanguinely think the contrary, that much the greater Party amongſt us need not be further ſatisfied therein.

I hope the Generality don't think that ſacred Order, and our Church-Government by it are light matters, both which the ancienteſt, beſt, and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity received as a divine Ordinance and Inſtitution, that was neceſſary to the being of a Church.

No Biſhop, no Church was then a received principle amongſt all Chriſtians; But the *Scottiſh* Presbiterian Principle, againſt which we ought to guard in the Treaty of Union, is a contradiction to it: For they hold and teach that Epiſcopacy is contrary to the Word of God, and an Antichriſtian Uſurpation over the Church. They were wont to baptize their Children into the Covenant, for the extirpation of it; Though Biſhops, as diſtinct from, and Superior to Presbiters, were ever received, and obeyed as the Succeſſors of the Apoſtles, and the Epiſcopal Government of the Church acknowledged to be of Divine Inſtitution, and by conſequence of unalterable Right.

In conſequence of this Principle no Sect or Hereſie of old pretended to be a Church, till they were headed by ſome Biſhop, nor was there any Church in the World,

World, but what was Epiſcopal from the time of the Apoſtles till the Reformation. And Sir, If I was asked to give Reaſons, why the Reformation, which began ſo ſuccesfully hath made no progreſs, but rather gone backwards for above One Hundred years, I ſhould aſſign the Perſecution, and aboliſhing of Epiſcopacy for one.

For how ſhould God bleſs a Reformation of a Church, which lays aſide that Inſtitution, which he appointed for the perpetual Government of it?

Or how ſhould he be pleaſed with Setting up the Presbiterian *Parity* in Great *Britain*, in one Part of which the pretended Presbiters cannot prove their Succeſſion from true Presbiters, and where in the other, I mean in *England*, they derive their Succeſſion indeed from true Presbiters, but ſuch as Revolted from, and Rebelled againſt their own Biſhops, and were by Conſequence as great Schiſmaticks as ever were in the Chriſtian World?

Wherefore Sir permit me to tell you, that your Chriſtian, as well as our Civil rights oblige you to Guard againſt the Presbiterian *Parity*, and to that end, to form ſuch Articles in the Treaty of Union, as will reſtore Epiſcopacy in *Scotland*, if it be not before Reſtored, and by God's Bleſſing preſerve it in *England* unto the end of the World.

Sir, I know you are Epiſcopal by Choice, and Principle, as well as by Extraction and Education: It is for that, you and other Members have of late felt the Ill will of the Presbiterians without, and their Friends within the Church, who you may be ſure, will be very Active both above, and under board, in the Treaty of Union, and I hope you, and all the Gentlemen of the Houſe, who, as true Chriſtians, and true Engliſh-men, wiſh well to the Church of *England*, will be as Vigilant, and Active, as they.

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I promiſed to be Brief, and will therefore haſten to the Second part of my Diſcourſe, which I ſhall finiſh, I hope, before I have tired your Patience.

It has been the Objection of very wiſe Men againſt an Union it ſelf (for which I again confeſs, I think there is great Reaſon,) that *Scotland*, if no Proviſion is made to the contrary, cannot help ſending up Men of ſmall Eſtates for their Repreſentatives, who will be apt to be Bought off, and ſo, conſequently Endanger all our Liberties.

But with ſubmiſſion I humbly conceive, that we ſhall be very wanting indeed to our ſelves, if we ſuffer this to happen.

To be ſure ſome Proportion will be obſerved, as to their Numbers, and there ought as well, Care to be taken in Relation to their Fortunes.

I will not preſume to ſay what Numbers of the Nobility (Spiritual or Temporal Lords) we ſhould admit into our Upper-Houſe.

But certainly no Scots-man, who underſtands and Loves the true Intereſt of his Country, *who would have Freedom maintained there and here*, can take it amiſs, if we ſtipulate, that none but their Peers (which are our Knights of the Shire) and thoſe too ſuch, as have Four Hundred Pounds Land of Inheritance *per Annum*, ſhall come into *St. Stephen's* Chappel; and whoever hath that Eſtate, *and is Conformable to Epiſcopacy*, may I preſume be, humanly ſpeaking, ſafely truſted.

I will not take up more of your time now, but as the Union proceeds, I may perhaps Entertain you with ſome other, and farther Thoughts; and I hope ſeveral Perſons who are better able to write of, and ſpeak to, what concerns all, and therefore every man hath a Right to Treat of, will put forth Solid and Elaborate Compoſures upon this Subject.

In the mean while I intreat you to forgive the Freedome of *SIR*, *Your Faithful Humbleſt Servant.*